

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

C O N F I D E N T I A L BAGHDAD 003156

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/30/2025

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [IZ](#)

SUBJECT: BEATING BACK ANY ATTEMPT TO EXTEND CONSTITUTION
DRAFTING PERIOD

Classified By: Deputy Chief of Mission David M. Satterfield for reasons

1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (C) In a meeting with Poloffs today, Constitutional Committee Chairman Humam Hammudi indicated that he was seriously considering a request to the Transitional National Assembly for a delay of 2-4 weeks in the August 15 constitutional drafting deadline. Hammudi said he had discussed this idea with constitutional experts provided by the United Nations, and that he believed it would be possible to have the delay without affecting either the October 15 referendum and December 15 elections deadlines. He said he had proposed the idea of requesting such a delay to members of the Presidency Council for their consideration. Hammudi indicated that the delay would be requested in advance of the August 1 date, as required by the Transitional Administrative Law (TAL). In explaining the cause for delay, Hammudi emphasized the extremist demands on federalism-related issues now being made by Kurdish members of his committee. He stressed the need to have the Kurdish leadership - and especially Masud Barzani - personally engaged in order to facilitate the necessary compromises.

12. (C) Poloffs made clear to Hammudi that formally requesting a delay would be a mistake, and would send signals to the world that the Iraqi political process is hitting serious obstacles. (In response, Hammudi suggested it might be possible to avoid requesting a delay by August 1, but to have the Committee continue its work past August 15 nonetheless - a proposal which would raise a different set of issues.) Tonight and tomorrow, we will make the rounds of the Iraqi political elite to stress the need to keep up work on the constitution through the August 15 deadline. The Ambassador will meet with President Talabani, PM Ja'afari, and SCIRI leader Hakim. We will also reach out to TNA Speaker al-Hassani and Deputy Speaker Shahristani. We do not anticipate problems in heading off the notion of a request for an extension of the deadline at this point.

13. (C) In addition, we will be working with Talabani to schedule a political summit of the most senior leaders on August 4. The Ambassador will seek to ensure that Barzani will travel to Baghdad to participate in the meeting. We will also continue our work on all fronts to moderate the demands of the various factions and help facilitate a compromise by August 15.

14. (C) Comment: Another Shia member of the constitution drafting committee warned us today that the committee might seek to extend the drafting period. We have consistently warned the committee, and Iraq's political leadership, against this idea, and they understand how seriously we take this. We anticipate that we can forestall any request to the Presidency Council with the stepped up engagement outlined in para 2 above. End Comment.

15. (U) REO HILLAH, REO BASRAH, REO KIRKUK, REO MOSUL minimize considered.
Khalilzad